

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATOR VINAL**

10:00:12 AM 9:11

Re: Expressing Opposition to National Grid-Proposed Rate Increase

WHEREAS, in August 2020, National Grid, a public utility providing electricity to hundreds of thousands of residents in Erie County and Western New York proposed, and requested permission from the New York State Public Service Commission (“Commission”) to increase electric rates on customers by \$100.4 million effective in July 2021; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Commission granted National Grid a \$301.6 million rate hike; and

WHEREAS, the newly-requested rate hike would be 4% for electric customers – well above the consumer price index; and

WHEREAS, the utility says that the rate hikes would help it make needed upgrades, prepare for and recover from storms, and integrate clean power sources into the power grid; and

WHEREAS, in announcing the proposal, the company downplayed the rate increase and argued that it was an “upstate New York customer assistance proposal. . . that would provide up to \$50 million in financial assistance to support its most economically vulnerable residential customers as well as businesses that are struggling because of the pandemic’s financial impact”; and

WHEREAS, consumer groups and activists are concerned that the utility is using these explanations as a way to get a rate increase at a time when many consumers and residents are still struggling with unemployment, problems paying their mortgage or rent and putting food on their tables; and

WHEREAS, residents of Buffalo, a city in which 33% of households are experiencing housing and utility cost shocks and financial problems, some prior to, and some exacerbated by COVID-19, cannot afford a rate hike; and

WHEREAS, National Grid reported \$4.3 billion in profits in 2019, demonstrating that the company’s financial bottom line is solid and a rate hike is not necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature expresses its concern and opposition to National Grid’s proposed rate increase for electric customers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body calls on the New York State Public Service Commission to reject the utility’s rate hike; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the New York State Public Service Commission, to PUSH Buffalo, and to Ken Kujawa, Regional Director of National Grid.

Fiscal Impact: None for this resolution.